A Bite-Sized Intro To DSA Factions

DSA has many factions. What do they want?

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31

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This post provides a quick introduction to DSA's many internal factions.

In early August, DSA will hold its 2025 National Convention, which will determine DSA National's political direction from 2025 to 2027. Factions dominate DSA's National Conventions. Faction members won a hypermajority of chapter delegates seats (>80%) and will win a hypermajority of National Political Committee (NPC) seats (>80%). Factions wrote virtually all proposals that met the 250 signature requirement and virtually all proposals that will pass (besides consensus resolutions).

Therefore, you must understand DSA's factions to understand DSA National politics.

This post provides, for each DSA faction: The political wing, type & size, ideology, web links, a 1-to-3 sentence summary, and a TLDR.

> **What are DSA's political wings?** DSA's factions fit into "wings" of DSA politics, which support different socialist strategies. The terms "Left" and "Right" spawns endless semantic debates. I use "DSA Left" to mean "less willing to run on the Democratic Party ballot line / less willing to work with non-socialists / less importance placed on 'inside' strategies" and "DSA Right" to mean "more".
>
> **What are the "types" of factions?** Most factions are "caucuses", which have formal membership and leaders. Other factions are "slates" or "platforms" or "programs", which have no formal membership. Both types bring together people of similar ideology within DSA.
>
> **What is a faction's "ideology"?** Few factions explicitly state their "Ideology" in a single phrase. I've picked the best short description for their theoretical inspirations, whether or not the faction explicitly uses that phrase.
>
> **What goes into the "summary"?** The "Summary" sections below focus on the positions that set each faction apart, NOT all positions a faction holds. For

example, all factions include some wording about winning power, organizing labor, ending bigotry, ending capitalism, ending imperialism, etc. All summaries below use as many direct quotes as possible.

This post includes all factions known to have convention delegates. In 2025, DSA's wings and factions include (with guesstimates of the % of delegates clearly from each wing):

DSA Right (~**15%**)**:** North Star (NS), Socialist Majority Caucus (SMC)

DSA Center-Right (~**20%**)**:** Groundwork (GW), Carnation, Mountain

DSA Center (~**10%**)**:** Bread and Roses (B&R)

DSA Center-Left (~**18%**)**:** Reform and Revolution (R&R), Marxist Unity Group (MUG), Caracol, Communist Caucus (CC), Emerge, Cultivate, Constellation

DSA Left (~**18%**)**:** Winter, Red Line (RL), 21st Century Socialism (21CS), Red Star (RS), Springs of Revolution (SoR), Mass Work Caucus (MWC), Liberation, Just
Break Already (JBA), Libertarian Socialist Caucus (LSC)

DSA Right

North Star (NS) ✴

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2018

Ideology: Reformist socialism and social democracy

TLDR: Popular front against fascism

Summary: NS argues that the Republican party are "neo-fascists", against which DSA must organize the "broadest possible movement", a "multi-racial" "cross class" "progressive coalition", to prevent the "loss of American democracy".

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, join

Socialist Majority (SMC) ✨

Type: Large caucus, >150 delegates, created 2018

Ideology: Democratic road to socialism

TLDR: Elect popular socialists to build socialist majority

Summary: SMC strongly supports DSA's electoral work, particularly "unapologetic democratic socialists on the Democratic ballot line", such as Zohran Mamdani, which SMC holds is the "only viable strategy" to elect socialists and build a socialist party in the "party surrogate" strategy. SMC argues that DSA's "primary task" now "is to defeat the far right", that the Republicans are a "growing fascist threat", and that DSA must join, organize, and lead the "emerging anti-Trump coalition" in the "anti-fascist majority".

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, join

DSA Center-Right

Groundwork (GW) ��

Type: Large caucus, >150 delegates, created 2023

Ideology: Democratic road to socialism with eco-socialist flavor

TLDR: Elect socialists + run climate pressure campaigns

Summary: GW strongly supports DSA's pressure campaigns, such as New York's Build Public Renewables Act, and DSA's electoral work, such as Zohran Mamdani, which "grow our membership", build a "mass socialist party", and "reestablish democratic socialism as a credible political alternative". GW argues that DSA and the Left "should raise the banner of socialism in clear opposition to fascism", or else anti-fascists "have no option but to follow the Center's leadership".

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, join

Carnation ��

Type: Small cross-caucus program, created 2025

Ideology: Multi-tendency socialism

TLDR: Adopt short minimal program + elect federal socialists

Summary: Carnation's program calls for DSA to: Adopt a short "minimal program"; build "militant unions"; build "federal power" to fight against "climate

change" and "genocidal wars"; run 5 Congressional candidates "on the Democratic ballot line"; and run a DSA'er in the 2028 presidential primary.

Links: Website, position doc, join

Mountain ▲

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2025

Ideology: Centrist Marxism with Gramscian flavor

TLDR: Elect more local socialists + war of position

Summary: Mountain argues that DSA should maintain the big tent; pursue "pyramid electoralism" (running DSA cadre in lower elections, then higher, to raise win rates); and enact a program suited to the "war of position".

Links: Position doc, join

DSA Center

Bread and Roses (B&R or BnR) ����

Type: Large caucus, >100 delegates, created 2019

Ideology: Democratic road to socialism with Post-Trotskyist flavor

TLDR: Organize militant unions + slow dirty break

Summary: B&R strongly supports DSA's labor work, particularly the "rank and file" strategy for militant unions and "wall-to-wall" student union organizing, which build toward "organizing the working class as workers". B&R supports "tactical flexibility" on "ballot line" questions, with a majority hoping to "eventually split" the "Democratic Party coalition" in a slow "dirty break", and a minority opposed to "dirty break propagandism" that hurts "elect[ing] class struggle candidates".

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, reading list, join

DSA Center-Left

Reform and Revolution (R&R or RnR) ����

Type: Midsize caucus, >30 delegates, created 2018

Ideology: Trotskyism and Luxemburgism

TLDR: Organize militant unions + dirty break

Summary: R&R strongly supports DSA's "rank and file" labor work. R&R, like B&R, holds divergent views on electoral work: R&R's position doc calls for DSA to "help the Berniecrat wing" of the Dems "fight the capitalist wing" to build support for "establishing of a mass working class party", but also "supporting independent and socialist candidates wherever possible and viable", while R&R's NPC candidate calls for DSA to "plan for a break [from the Dems] within the next four years". R&R worked with MUG at the 2023 and 2025 conventions.

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, reading list, join

Marxist Unity Group (MUG) ☭����

Type: Large caucus, >60 delegates, created 2021

Ideology: Centrist Marxism with Kautskyist and Leninist flavor

TLDR: Strict endorsee discipline + fight the Constitution

Summary: MUG supports tribune electoralism (run "militant socialist candidates" who "refuse to join the Democratic Party caucus" or "endorse non-socialists", do "principled agitation", and unendorse & expel electeds who fail "tribune obligations"). MUG wants DSA to adopt a "revolutionary minimum-maximum program, their "fighting socialist program". MUG argues that DSA should pursue Marxist democratic republicanism ("fight the reactionary Constitution", agitate for a "working class revolution", and win a "plurinational democratic socialist republic"). MUG worked with R&R at the 2023 and 2025 conventions.

Links: Website, newspaper 1 & 2, position doc, reading list

Caracol ��

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2023

Ideology: Socialist degrowth

TLDR: Promote socialist degrowth

Summary: Caracol argues that DSA should pursue a "radical Green New Deal

without growth", or degrowth: Reduction of material throughput and energy use.

Links: Website, position doc, join

Communist Caucus (CC) ♠☭��

Type: Midsize caucus, >30 delegates, created 2018

Ideology: Multi-tendency communism with lean toward autonomism

TLDR: Base building in labor & tenant unions + low electoral priority

Summary: CC de-prioritizes electoral work, because "socialist electoral runs", no matter how "disciplined", will yield little while the proletariat is "disorganized and thus disempowered"; therefore, DSA should focus on "extra-electoral organizing and actions", also called "base building", particularly through labor unions and community orgs, such as "autonomous tenant unions". CC shared a newspaper with Emerge until 2025.

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, reading list, join

Emerge ��

Type: Small caucus, >10 delegates, created 2019

Ideology: Multi-tendency communism, unclear leanings

TLDR: Base building in labor & tenant unions + medium electoral priority

Summary: Emerge partially de-prioritizes electoral work; elected socialists can "popularize demands" and empower "community organization"; however, to "actually transform society" DSA must build an "organized community base" through "labor unions, tenant unions, and community safety networks", with a focus on ending "identity-based oppression". Emerge shared a newspaper with CC until 2025.

Links: Website, newspaper 1 & 2, position doc, reading list, join

Cultivate

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2025

Ideology: Unknown

Summary: Cultivate has not published any material. One member called it "between Emerge and LSC".

Links: none

Constellation ❖❖

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2023

Ideology: Multi-tendency revolutionary socialism

TLDR: Anti-imperialism + soft elected discipline

Summary: Constellation, like CPN, is a mixture: Strongly anti-imperialist (even considering merging with Red Star) and strongly party surrogate, rather than dirty break or clean break (though supports elected discipline more than "right" caucuses).

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, join

DSA Left

Winter ❄

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2022

Ideology: Democratic socialism

TLDR: Strict endorsee discipline + anti-idpol

Summary: Winter argues that DSA should run candidates only when "our movement is strong enough so they're actually subordinate to DSA"; elsewhere, DSA should prioritize labor work; and DSA should unite "the entire working class" and support "struggles for the liberation" of marginalized groups but "oppose identity politics" as "project[s] of an elite political class".

Links: Website, position doc, join

Red Line (RL)

Type: Tiny slate, <10 delegates, created 2025

Ideology: Multi-tendency revolutionary socialism

TLDR: Strict endorsee discipline

Summary: RL argues that DSA should pursue a "long-term" "dirty break"; in the meantime, DSA "candidates should not identify as Democrats" and DSA should have "control over fundraising and funds raised, staffing decisions, and campaign data"; and DSA should support militant rank-and-file unionism.

Links: Position doc, join

21st Century Socialism (21CS)

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2024

Ideology: Actually Existing Socialism

TLDR: Defend China, Venezuela, etc.

Summary: 21CS argues that DSA should "learn from socialist projects" in "China, Cuba, Viet Nam, & Venezuela" and and from Global South socialist/communist parties. 21CS is strongly associated with Tricontinental, patron of the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL).

Links: Website, position doc, join

Red Star Caucus (RS) ☭��

Type: Large caucus, >60 delegates, created 2019

TLDR: Strict endorsee discipline + greater central organization

Ideology: Marxism-Leninism

Summary: RSC argues that DSA should "cut ties with the Democratic Party", run "agitational campaigns", and seek "full institutional control" over "candidates' messaging [and] work once elected". RSC argues that DSA is the "best incubator" to "cohere a vanguard party", which can "coordinate work across locals" and prepare to exploit the coming revolutionary situation.

Links: Website, newspaper 1 & 2, position doc, reading list, join

Springs of Revolution (SoR)

Type: Midsize slate, >30 delegates, created 2023 as the Anti-Zionist Slate

Ideology: Multi-tendency revolutionary socialism

TLDR: Strict endorsee discipline + BDS campaigns

Summary: SoR hopes to build DSA into a ""mass revolutionary force that rises to the moment"; SOR's "Fighting Anti-Zionist" resolution asks the NPC to expel Zionist members / endorsee and to endorse several BDS campaigns, including DSA's Labor for an Arms Embargo, PYM's Mask Off Maersk, and ex-DSA PSWG's No Appetite For Apartheid; SoR's electoral resolution "makes it a priority for DSA to take incremental steps to explore building a broad Left-Labor electoral

coalition capable of organizing the foundation of independence from the duopoly" (read: a working group to research a 2028 clean break).

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, join

Mass Work Caucus (MWC)

Type: Small caucus, >10 delegates, created 2024

Ideology: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism

TLDR: Tenant organizing + immediate clean break

Summary: MWC argues that DSA should move "away from participation in bourgeois parties" into an "explicit break from the Democratic Party"; and that DSA should focus more "in the streets" on community and tenant organizing outside the "electoral and union spheres".

Links: Website, position doc, reading list, join

Liberation Caucus ⛓️‍💥☭

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2025

Ideology: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism

TLDR: Reject professional middle class + embrace Maoist demcent

Summary: Liberation argues that DSA should self-struggle to "combat liberalism", "opportunist", and "revisionist trends" that will "rot the soul of the organization"; that DSA should turn away from "the 'middle class', union staffers, and Democratic Party workers" to avoid a "fundamentally rightist orientation"; and

that DSA should adopt "democratic centralism" to "transform itself into a vanguard formation".

Links: Website, position doc, reading list, join

Just Break Already (JBA)

Type: Tiny caucus, <10 delegates, created 2024

Ideology: Trotskyism

TLDR: Expel all electeds + lower age of consent

Summary: JBA argues that DSA should "immediately break" from the Democratic Party, and that DSA should "expel all electeds", such as "Rashida Tlaib", because they are "gravediggers of living struggles". JBA are entryists from the Spartacist League US, aka the hated "pedo Trots".

Links: Website, newspaper, join

Libertarian Socialist Caucus (LSC) ��

Type: Midsize caucus, >30 delegates, created 2017

Ideology: Anarchists and libertarian socialists

TLDR: Strict endorsee discipline + direct democracy

Summary: LSC argues that DSA's electeds must follow DSA's imperative mandates ("be bound in discipline to the democratic will") or else have "ties severed" by the national organization; that DSA should shift toward direct democracy ("direct member assemblies", "direct referenda and recall", "proportional representation"); and that DSA should fight "state hegemony" and build working-class "self-governance".

Links: Website, newspaper, position doc, join

Conclusions

No matter your faction, I think we can all agree:

DSA should follow its Red North Star through the Mountain Winters, Emerge into Springs of Carnations & Roses, lay Groundwork to Cultivate a 21st Century Socialist Majority, and win Reforms & Liberation with Mass Work.

More seriously: Making this meant reading a lot of caucus publications. Every faction has good writers, good arguments, and dedicated organizers. Every faction has stupid assholes. If you disagree, you're probably the stupid asshole.

Other primers

Didn't like this caucus primer? Here's a list of all other caucus primers I could find.

2025: "The Long Reroute" by SMC member David Duhalde (high-quality)

2025: "Primer on Caucuses" by SMC member Vincent L

2025: "Guide to DSA Politics" by LSC member Bryce S (high-quality)

2024: "YDSA Caucus Guide" by MUG

2023: "Internal Politics of DSA" by LSC member Bryce S

2023: "Guide to Caucuses in DSA" by BnR member Griffin M

2023: "Who's Who in DSA" by RnR members Jesse D and Philip L

2023: "Unite the Pro-Party Wing" by MUG member Shuvu B

2021: "Factions by the Numbers" by New Majority

2021: "Who's Who in DSA" by RnR members Jesse D and Philip L

2021: "2021 DSA Convention Primer" by Tempest member Andrew S

2020: "DSA's Factions Explained" by SMC member Charles L

2019: "2019 Convention Breakdown" by Tempest member Andrew S

2019: "DSA Caucuses" by Matt D

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